**Field trip report**

**Discussion on production of early generation high quality seed potato for Belg 2018 Africa RISING activities**

**Date**: June 27/2017

**Venue**: Adet Agricultural Research Center, Adet

**Attendees**

1. Dr. Tesfaye Abebe
2. Alemu Worku
3. Bayeh Berihun
4. Dr. Berga Lemaga
5. Gebrehiwot Hailemariam

Dr. Berga gave a briefing on the intended potato activities that will be implemented by CIP under the Africa RISING Project in the Ethiopian highlands. He accentuated the importance of linking community-based potato seed producers to clean potato starter seed varieties so that the Africa RISING farmers can have access to quality seed potato to increase their potato yields in a sustainable manner and to help achieve the ambitious objective of scaling potato technologies to thousands of farmers. In its first phase, the project demonstrated the importance of potato technologies, particularly improved quality seed varieties and diffused light stores for storing seed potatoes at its pilot sites. The support of CIP and its partners in the scaling program focuses on providing Training of Trainers (ToTs) to woreda experts and development agents to cascade the knowledge to farmers, making starter seed available and conducting demonstrations at the scaling sites of the respective regions. The nature of the crop and prevalence of seed borne disease, bacterial wilt made it difficult to source seed from growers that have not gone through a rigorous inspection, particularly for diseases and varietal purity. Moreover, the current QDS inspection is mainly based on visual inspection which may not address the latent infection of Ralstonia solanacearum, the bacterium that causes bacterial wilt. Therefore, early generation (clean) seed can only be available from the federal and regional research institutes that produce G1 and G2 seed in screen houses. Adet Agricultural Research Center, being the national coordinator of potato research should be the major provider of clean starter seed potato.

The center (Adet) is aware of the technology demonstration in the first phase of the Africa RISING project and Debreberhan Research Center is still among the local stakeholders contributing to the research and scaling of the project. Adet kindly agreed to supply the clean early generation, preferably G2 seed potato, but wanted to know the amount of seed expected per variety, varieties that need to be multiplied, when the seed is expected and for which sites the seed is needed.

The sites are:

* 1. 5 woredas of Southern zone in Tigray,
  2. 10 woredas of bale zone in Oromia
  3. 10 woredas of Northern Shoa zone of Amhara region
  4. 10 woredas of Hossana zone in SNNPR region

Quantity: the project initially wanted to have early generation seed (G2) for two hectares of land in each region (about 4 tons/region).

Varieties: The varieties are Belete & gudene but Debre Birhan requested for Gorebela variety

The season: the project wanted to multiply in 2017 meher season if early generation seed is available otherwise we can plan for the next season

The team pointed out that some of the current sites, particularly Debre Birhan area is not a potential site for potato, as the soil is not that good for potatoes and the culture for potato growing is lacking; diary being the major focus. Tigray and Oromia (Bale, Sinana) are good sites. Therefore, if the project wanted to bring impact, it is important to include south Gonder and Gojam (Awi zone) in Amhara region and Geta and Gumer which are potential woredas for potato in SNNPR region. They also underlined the need to provide support to seed producing cooperatives under the QDS system. Moreover, it will be important to get preferred sites of each zone for the regional governments if we envision to get their support, especially financial support for wide scaling of potato technologies.

The team also added that ARARI did not have open field in Adet research center for seed potato multiplication to avoid disease spread. The center will do the multiplication in the screen houses and we saw that Adet has many screen houses that can serve the purpose.

Regarding the season they mentioned that they do not have any seed for meher but they can multiply G2 material in meher for the coming belg season in 2018.

Finally they have agreed to tell us in the shortest possible time their capacity, amount they can commit and price of the seed.